

Lewis County Planning Commission **Workshop**

Lewis County Courthouse
Commissioners' Hearing Room – 2nd Floor
351 NW North St – Chehalis, WA

August 11, 2015 - Meeting Notes

Planning Commissioners Present: Mike Mahoney, District 1; Jeff Millman, District 2; Richard Tausch, District 2; Leslie Myers, District 1

Planning Commissioners Excused: Russ Prior, District 3; Sue Rosbach, District 1

Planning Commissioners Absent: Bob Guenther, District 3

Staff Present: Lee Napier; Glenn Carter; Fred Evander; Pat Anderson

Others Present: Please see sign in sheet

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from July 14, 2015
- Comprehensive Plan Basics
- Types of Development allowed by GMA
- PowerPoint on Rural Character

1. Call to Order

Chair Mahoney called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm. The Commissioners introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda and it was approved.

3. Approval of Meeting Notes

There were no changes to the meeting notes from July 14, 2015 and were approved as presented.

4. Old Business

There was no old business.

5. New Business

- a. Update on 2017 Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Evander, Lewis County Long Range Planner, stated he would like to lay the foundation for the 2017 Comprehensive Plan and what needs to be addressed as part of that update. For the benefit of the newer Planning Commissioners, Mr. Evander explained that the comprehensive plan deals with land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities and utilities. Certain things need to be done to be consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA). If too much is put into the Plan then the Plan needs to be amended to change a regulation, so it is wise not to get too detailed.

The plan ultimately provides an opportunity for people to voice their thoughts, concerns and visions of the future of Lewis County. Mr. Evander hopes the plan will lay out what is to be achieved and the steps to get there.

The plan should also coordinate local decision-making. For example, the Land Use element influences how the zoning map is created. The Transportation element includes a transportation improvement program which lays out transportation needs envisioned for the next six to twenty years. The Capital Facilities element includes an inventory of existing capital facilities and identifies deficiencies in the plan. Where deficiencies are identified the plan is required to include a tentative improvement program and a schedule to pay for the improvements.

Some key goals of the plan are to promote the creation of more jobs in Lewis County; encourage vital rural settlements and small incorporated communities; promote continued operation and viability of natural resource industries; and promote the most flexibility within the document.

Key issues in the update include population allocations, zoning designations, traffic on county roadways, and a new requirement of GMA is a way to promote physical activity throughout the county.

Mr. Evander stated he would like to explain how the land use portion of the plan is working and get a sense of how the Planning Commissioners feel about rural character.

Mr. Evander presented a PowerPoint with photos of local cities, LAMIRDS and rural areas in Lewis County. The accompanying handout described various major developments that could be found or created in Lewis County. He stated Lewis County is allowed two master planned industrial developments. Currently Lewis County is not taking advantage of that but it may be something to consider including in the comprehensive plan.

The handout also described the types of development allowed by GMA. These include rural areas and three types of LAMIRDS: Type 1 – infill of existing areas; Type 2 – intensification of new small-scale tourist areas; and Type 3 – intensification of isolated nonresidential uses.

Chair Mahoney stated there are some LAMIRDS that were much larger communities at one time and are now limited by their description. He would like to see what can be done to help them. Examples of these are Galvin and Onalaska. Mr. Evander stated rural character can be defined to address what Chair Mahoney is saying and offer flexibility within the LAMIRDS. Currently the comp plan is not as flexible as it could be, which is why he is focusing on rural character. Some of these areas have densities in excess of what is permitted now; they are more urban in character.

Mr. Evander asked if rural is defined by uses or something other than the uses: appearances, etc. For argument's sake, he would say rural is not so much the use, but rather the total amount of the use of a site is far more important than determining what is rural and what is not. For example, if an agricultural site is covered with buildings, would it still be a rural use? Chair

Mahoney stated the number of buildings is dictated by what is being produced, not by someone's definition of "rural." Mr. Evander stated that sometimes what is being regulated under the GMA is precisely opposite of what constitutes rural land. It is sometimes densities of housing, building heights and uses. Mr. Evander believes land utilization is more important and use is less important. If flexibility is to be increased in the comp plan and code then going away from a use-based characterization is important.

Chairman Mahoney stated part of rural character involves recreation. A certain amount of development is required so that more people can enjoy the recreational opportunities and rural character. White Pass has rather intense development along the highway. If those businesses weren't there people could not get into the back country. That is still a rural area because it is a small part of the total package. Developing a recreational area does not necessarily destroy the rural character of the area.

Mr. Evander concluded by saying tonight's presentation was a preview of what the Planning Commission will be doing. This is a chance to put forward a vision of what the county is shooting for and identify steps to get there.

Ms. Napier stated there will be some new terminology to become familiar with and she hoped when the Commissioners were out driving through the county they would see some things that they had not been noticed before, as well as things that are cherished and to be preserved.

6. Calendar

a. Set Public Hearing on Countywide Planning Policies

There was discussion about the calendar and it was determined that the next meeting will be set after the Citizens Advisory Committee meets regarding the Shoreline Master Plan. The soonest for a public hearing on the Countywide Planning Policies is September 8 and Ms. Napier will not be available on that date. She asked that the public hearing be set for September 22. The public hearing was set for September 22.

7. Good of the Order

Gene Butler stated that what Mr. Evander said was intriguing and contained a number of ascertains that would be beneficial for Mr. Butler to review.

8. Adjourn

The Planning Commission's business concluded and the meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.